

February 11, 2019

Dear Chair Clem and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rebecca Thistlethwaite and I am the Director of the Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network (NMPAN) at OSU.

I have some concerns about HB4152, which I am sharing below. I am out of state this week and was unable to testify yesterday and won't be able to be present at the work session. I would be happy to work with the Committee in the future to create a better piece of legislation.

-Limiting SB4152 to just beef and lamb does not make sense and will create confusion. Oregon farmers also raise pigs, goats, yaks, bison, buffalo and other 4-legged species.

-Establishing a state inspection program is unfeasible financially. The fees to processors would be too high because there aren't enough of them to cover the costs of operating this program. ODA already looked into this years ago and commissioned a study.

-Limiting it to only interstate sales is also short-sighted. If Oregon establishes a state program, they should be open to joining the Cooperative Interstate Shipment program that USDA FSIS offers. That would allow state inspected plants to apply and then be able to ship across state lines.

-If a processor goes through the considerable time and investment of upgrading their facilities, processes, and recordkeeping programs to become state inspected, they might as well apply for USDA FSIS inspection. It is the same exact set of rules, plus it gives a plant more flexibility where that meat can be sold. There are no advantages for a plant to be just state inspected.

The sponsors of this bill should postpone moving this bill forward and speak to more stakeholders so as to better understand the problem and the so-called bottleneck. This proposed bill will not address the underlying problems and will only create confusion for processors, farmers, and consumers.

Again, I would be happy to help create a more comprehensive and solutions-oriented approach and have already been in conversation with ODA, Oregon Beef Council, and others about better solutions.

Sincerely,

-Rebecca Thistlethwaite, Director

Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network (NMPAN)

Oregon State University

www.nichemeatprocessor.org